

PHILEMON 17-25
MAY 15, 2022



FBC SUMMIT STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

Without naming any names, what is something wrong someone could do to you that you could easily forgive? What is something you don't think you could forgive? Why?

When it comes to forgiveness, what's the bottom line? Why do you think God wants us to forgive each other?

Jesus forgives us, and, at the same time, forgiveness might be the hardest thing God asks us to do. So, Paul, speaking to Philemon about his struggle to forgive Onesimus, speaks to all of us. Let's listen!

DISCUSSION

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILEMON 17-25.

Who would you rather hang out with: people who agree with everything you say and won't oppose you or challenge you in your faith, or people who will tell you the truth and point you to Christ when you're struggling to follow Him? Explain.

Do you consider yourself a partner with other Christians in our youth group? Why or why not?

If we all did consider each other partners, what would change?

What is something difficult you're facing right now in your relationship with God (i.e. something He's called you to do that you don't want to obey)?

Who is someone you would let speak truthfully to you in that hard situation, like Paul did for Philemon?

Why did Paul care so much that he would pay Onesimus's debt for him (vv. 18-19)? What was in it for Paul?

Give an example of a time someone else's obedience to God benefitted you in some way.

When you have to make a decision whether or not to obey God, which are you more likely to allow to impact you the most: God's love, your circumstances, your feelings, others' opinions, or something else?

What does Paul's letter to Philemon say to you about the relationship between faith and works?

GOING DEEPER

Read verses 18-19 again. How is what Paul offered a picture of what Jesus did for all of us?

How can you remind yourself of God's grace to you in Christ? How would that help you in your relationships with other people?

APPLICATION

What is a situation where you've been struggling to "show what you know" in relationship with Christ?

Which of these three truths from Philemon is God speaking to you about the most: consider your partners in Christ, consider God's love, or show what you know? Explain.

What is a practical way you need to express your gratitude to Christ for His forgiveness?

PRAYER

Thank God for His love and the privilege we have to relate to each other as partners in Christ. Ask Him to help you consider those partnerships and His great love every day so that you will be brave to show what you know, acting as a funnel of His love for those who need it most.

COMMENTARY

PHILEMON 17-25

Verse 17. The word “if” has the force of “because.” Paul assumed Philemon considered him as a partner—a co-laborer in Christ’s service. The apostle made his direct appeal: He wanted Philemon to accept Onesimus in the same manner as Philemon would receive Paul if he were to visit.

Verses 18-19. Onesimus may have wronged Philemon and owed him something. Onesimus may have stolen money to fund his getaway. Philemon may have entrusted him with money to make purchases. Whatever the case, Onesimus was indebted to Philemon.

Verse 20. The Greek particle rendered “yes” gathers up the entire previous request on behalf of Onesimus. “Brother” was a warm term of Christian relationship. The implication is that if Onesimus and Philemon were Paul’s Christian brothers, they also were brothers to each other. The phrase “may I have joy” literally is “may I have profit” and is a play on the name Onesimus (“profitable”).

Verse 21. Paul was convinced of Philemon’s obedience to the apostle’s request. Paul did not assert his apostolic authority (see vv. 8-9) but instead asked that Philemon graciously grant his request. Paul added his confidence that Philemon would do even more than the apostle asked.

Verse 22. On the surface, Paul merely asked Philemon to prepare lodging in anticipation of a future visit. Underneath may be the implication that Paul well might come and check to see whether Philemon had granted the request for Onesimus. Throughout the letter, Paul gently and tactfully nudged Philemon to do what was right

Verse 25. All of Paul’s letters begin and end with a reference to grace (Gk charis), God’s unsought and undeserved favor, His free and unmerited saving action. Salvation and all its associated blessings were brought by Christ (2Co 8:9; 12:9). Although in Paul’s benedictions Christ is the sole source of charis, in his salutations (as in Phm 3) God the Father and Christ are generally mentioned as the joint and unified source of charis.